THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Rescue teams from some countries assisted the Government of Gujarat in the rescue and relief operations in the wake of earthquake.

(b) and (c) No such report has been received from the State Government.

Dredging operations at Bhavanapadu

3802. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh Government have approached the Union Government to waive the payment of a sum of Rs. 60.17 lakh, towards dredging operations at Bhavanapadu fishing harbour;

(b) whether it is also a fact that for dredging upto 27 days, there was no improvement in depths;

(c) if so, whether Union Government have considered such operations for 27 days as "Trial Dredging"; and

(d) whether the payment is waived?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes Sir, The Government of Andhra Pradesh had requested the Ministry to exempt the payment of hire charges for 27 days and to issue the instructions to Dredging Corporation of India to not insist for payment of hire charges as the harbour could not be operative after dredging for a period of 27 days.

(b) to (d) The Government of Andhra Pradesh entered into an agreement with the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) for deployment of dredger at Bhavanapadu fishing harbour. It was reported by the DCI that the dredging work was carried out as per the directions of the representative of the Government of Andhra Pradesh on board and the officials of the State Government have witnessed the quantum of dredged material and have signed the report to that effect. Therefore, the

payment has to be made to DCI as per the agreement between DCI and Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Groundnut production in Andhra Pradesh

3803. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a decline in the area and production of Groundnut in Andhra Pradesh over the years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for such a development likely to affect the edible oil sector of the State and the country; and

(c) what remedial measures Government propose to take to encourage Groundnut production in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) The figures regarding area and production of groundnut in Andhra Pradesh since 1996-97 are given below:

Year	Area (000 ha.)	Production (000 tonnes)
1996-97	2198.0	2045.5
1997-98	1834.4	1155.8
1998-99	1992.0	2155.0
1999-2000	1792.9	1119.9

The above data indicate that the area and production of groundnut in Andhra Pradesh remained fluctuating on year to year basis depending upon the behaviour of monsoon. Groundnut is generally grown in marginal and sub marginal lands and under rainfed conditions. Drought conditions in the State lead to a decline in the area as well as production.

(c) A Centrally sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP)